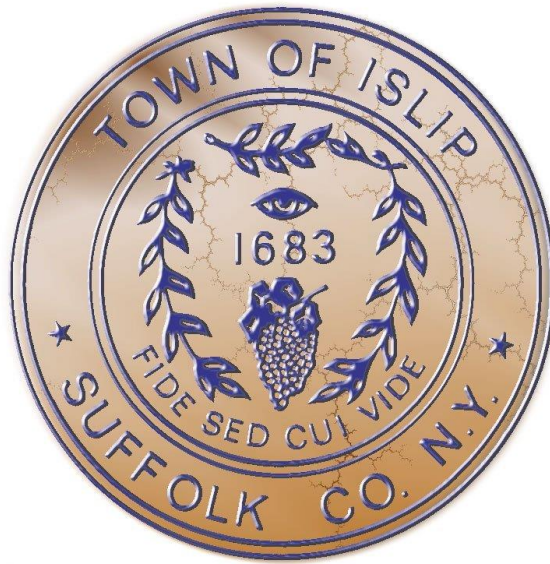


DRAFT

**TOWN OF ISLIP
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
TRAP/NEUTER/RETURN PROGRAM
FOR FERAL CATS**

STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES



June 1, 2016

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DRAFT OUTLINE
STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1.0 **INTENT:** The Town of Islip (“the Town”) herewith directs the Department of Environmental Control to implement and administer a Trap/Neuter/Return (TNR) program for the control of the increase in the population of feral cats. A TNR is a program wherein free-roaming cats are humanely trapped, sterilized, medically treated, and returned to the outdoor locations where they were trapped. Depending on available capacity at the Town of Islip Animal Shelter and Adopt-a-Pet Center (“the Animal Shelter”), Kittens still young enough to be socialized and friendly adult cats will be evaluated and placed for adoption in the Town’s Animal Shelter. The Town will contract with various, established, not-for-profit animal rescue groups; who are familiar with local feral cat colonies and their habits, to routinely and humanely trap feral cats and transport them to an approved, Town contracted Animal Hospital or Veterinarian for examination and sterilization. The Town will, via a donation or grant funded TIA account, subsidize the sterilization procedure. Any additional costs incurred, will be the responsibility of the Rescue group(s), who will provide the necessary aftercare and return the cat to its colony, thus ending the cycle of three times per year reproduction and the ever increasing cat population in the colonies within the Town. A TNR program can also assist in controlling the transmission of diseases and parasites.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS:** The following definitions are applicable to this Policy and Procedure statement:

Agriculture and Markets shall mean the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets.

Animal Rescue Group shall mean an incorporated, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the humane treatment of animals;

Department shall mean the Town Department of Environmental Control;

Feral Cat shall mean a free-roaming, generally not socialized, existing in a natural state cat, **not belonging to a Town resident**;

Shelter shall mean the Town of Islip Animal Shelter and Adopt-A-Pet Center;

Town shall mean the Town of Islip;

Voucher shall mean a promise to pay, at a specified rate, for professional Veterinary services for a spay/neuter procedure on a feral cat.

- 3.0 **BACKGROUND:** Feral cats often live in colonies, groups of feral cats that live together in one territory, often near food sources and shelter in all socio-economic environments. The female cats can produce litters approximately three times a year with varying numbers of offspring as a result. Because of their environment and little protection from predators and weather conditions survival of the litters is variable. Without human assistance feral cats are expected to have a high mortality rate, with approximately 50% dying within their first year. Rescue groups and concerned individuals are locally involved in the care of the cats through varying methods such as trap/neuter/return program to control the reproduction rate, providing food on a routine basis at specific locations and creation of small shelters. There are many residents opposed to the maintenance of feral cat colonies because the cats will roam into populated areas in search of food or feed on available wildlife.

The Town has no census data on an estimated number of cats within its borders. There are several established colonies known to rescue groups, individuals, and Shelter personnel. State law defines feral cats as free-roaming, and, as such; cannot be controlled in the same manner as roaming dogs.

A TNR program involves the trapping of feral cats at the colonies, spaying or neutering them by professional personnel, and then returning them to the place where they were originally trapped, where ongoing care is provided by volunteer caregivers. When spayed/neutered, the cats receive vaccinations against rabies, and attention to other medical needs.

A municipally sponsored TNR program with the goal of controlling the reproduction of the cat population to reduce impacts on neighborhoods, and the local environment has to operate in a transparent manner, with established methods, defined administrative procedures, and as a conduit for donated funds. Under State law, tax funds cannot be used for treatment of animals that are then returned to the wild.

- 4.0 **REGULATORY:** The following legislation relate to the management of dogs and cats:

- NYS Agriculture and Markets Law - Article 7, and Article 26;
- NYS Agriculture and Markets Law - Part 78, 79;
- NYS Agriculture and Markets Law - Section 353;
- Town of Islip Code - Chapters 12 and 37.

- 5.0 **TOWN SHELTER:** The current policy of the Town Shelter, with respect to cats, is to respond to injured, sick and Dead-on-Arrival (DOA) Animal calls. The Shelter does not respond to complaints about colonies, other than to provide information relative to available options. In the past, the Animal Shelter has cooperated with rescue groups, however; the cooperative program was not sustainable.

6.0

PROGRAM FUNDING:

- a. **TIA ACCOUNT:** As stated above, tax generated funds cannot be used by a municipality to financially support T/N/R programs. The Town does receive donations from individuals/groups/businesses to support the Shelter. Some of these donated funds come with conditions for their use. The Town places these funds in a Trust-in-Agency (TIA) account. If these funds are not earmarked for a specific Shelter use they can be transferred to a T/N/R account. The Town program will establish a Voucher System to reimburse participating area Animal Hospitals or Veterinarians who will perform the procedures on the cats brought to them by program-participating rescue groups.
- b. **PARTNERING FOR FUNDRAISING/GRANTS:** The intent of the program for future funding in order to replenish the T/N/R TIA account would be for the Town to participate in local fundraising events with rescue groups, and seek donations. With an active, established program, that has the support of rescue groups; the Town can apply for grants for continuation of the program. Interested rescue groups can hold independent fundraising events to assist the T/N/R program.
- c. **CONTINUATION OF PROGRAM:** Program is contingent upon the availability of funding through the Town's TIA Account, donations to the Shelter, and fundraising efforts.

7.0

TOWN T/N/R PROGRAM:

- a. **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION:** The Town T/N/R program will be administered by the Department of Environmental Control. The Department, through the Shelter, will administer the Voucher Program; interact with cooperating rescue groups, supply traps for temporary use (via a Deposit Program), communicate with participating Veterinarians and Animal Hospitals, and maintain the budget and records of T/N/R procedures.
- b. **TOWN CONTRACTED RESCUE GROUPS:** The Town will issue a public Request for Proposals for rescue groups to assist in the program. These groups shall be registered 501(C)3 not-for-profit (NFP) groups with a history of being involved with animal welfare issues. The Town will seek experienced, established groups to have a contractual agreement on the administration and operation of the TNR program. There will be periodic meetings with the Department and the group leaders to inform, grow, and maintain the T/N/R program. The rescue groups will do the field work with the colonies, transport or arrange transport for a cat to a supporting veterinary, ensure its care and return the cat to its colony.
- c. **TOWN CONTRACTED ANIMAL HOSPITALS/VETERINARIANS:** The Town will issue a Request for Proposals for defined professional services for the treatment of feral cats under a Town Voucher System. The Town will execute an agreement with the selected professionals, in order to implement the Voucher System.
- d. **TOWN ROLE:** The Town through the Department will provide and maintain traps on a loan basis to the contracted rescue groups. The Department could provide other assistance as they are legally able to. The Department will administer and control the TIA accounts with routine reports. The Department will make routine, written reports on the T/N/R to the Town Board.
- e. **SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER PROGRAM:** The routine professional services to be provided will be the spaying and neutering of feral cats secured by the rescue groups. Any additional professional services will be resolved as best under the circumstances.